

Introduced by Senator Kehoe

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February 24, 2005

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 29— Relative to the Joint Legislative Committee on Emergency Services and Homeland Security.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 29, as introduced, Kehoe. Emergency services and homeland security.

Under existing law, the Blue Ribbon Fire Commission is established in state government by action of the Governor to investigate the circumstances surrounding the October 2003 fires in southern California and that commission recommended the establishment of a permanent Joint Legislative Committee on Emergency Services and Homeland Security.

This measure would create the Joint Legislative Committee on Emergency Services and Homeland Security, with specified membership of each house of the Legislature. The joint committee would be constituted as an investigating committee of the houses, and its powers would include making recommendations as to legislation and forming technical advisory committees to assist it in carrying out its duties. The joint committee would continue in existence until November 30, 2006.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, California is the site of some of the most
2 extraordinary natural disasters in North America, including fires,
3 earthquakes, floods, landslides, mudslides, insect infestations,
4 and drought; and

5 WHEREAS, California is the nation's most populous state,
6 home to many of the nation's most desirable tourist destinations,
7 and home to many of the nation's most critical military
8 installations, and as such California is especially sensitive to the
9 threat of terrorism; and

10 WHEREAS, In October 2003, southern California experienced
11 the most devastating wild land/urban interface fire in the history
12 of California; nearly 740,000 acres burned, 246 people were
13 injured, and 24 Californians lost their lives, including one
14 firefighter, and more than 3,600 homes, 36 commercial
15 properties, and 1,169 outbuildings were destroyed; and

16 WHEREAS, On November 2, 2003, then-Governor Gray
17 Davis and then-Governor-elect Arnold Schwarzenegger
18 established a Blue Ribbon Fire Commission representing federal,
19 state, and local agencies, the firefighting community, and
20 affected communities; and

21 WHEREAS, The Blue Ribbon Fire Commission was charged
22 with hearing testimony on what worked and what did not work in
23 the efforts to fight the October 2003 fires and with reviewing and
24 providing recommendations on necessary improvements to
25 prevent and better respond to these fires in the future; and

26 WHEREAS, The commission, in its report to the Governor,
27 made a number of recommendations and prioritized their
28 importance, including the establishment of a permanent Joint
29 Legislative Committee on Emergency Services and Homeland
30 Security; and

31 WHEREAS, The joint committee has explored the Blue
32 Ribbon Fire Commission report and taken action in support of
33 the Commission's findings and recommendations, and

34 WHEREAS, The members of the joint committee recognize
35 that the work of the joint committee needs to continue; now,
36 therefore, be it

37 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate*
38 *thereof concurring,* That the Joint Legislative Committee on
39 Emergency Services and Homeland Security is hereby
40 established; and be it further

1 *Resolved*, That the joint committee shall consist of 14
2 members, who shall include seven Assembly Members appointed
3 by the Speaker of the Assembly, four from the party having the
4 largest number of Members in the Assembly and three from the
5 party having the second largest number of Members, and seven
6 Senators appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules, four from
7 the party having the largest number of Members in the Senate
8 and three from the party having the second largest number of
9 Members; and be it further

10 *Resolved*, That the joint committee shall be under the direction
11 of a chairperson and vice chairperson that shall alternate between
12 the Assembly and the Senate from session to session and that
13 initially the joint committee shall be under the direction of a
14 Senate Chairperson and an Assembly Vice Chairperson,
15 appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules and the Speaker of
16 the Assembly, respectively; and be it further

17 *Resolved*, That the joint committee may provide a public
18 forum for discussion of California's emergency services and
19 homeland security and related issues to natural or human-caused
20 threats to California; and be it further

21 *Resolved*, That the joint committee, in order to assist it in
22 carrying out its duties, may form technical advisory committees,
23 including representatives from the public safety and emergency
24 services disciplines, to help evaluate federal, state, and local
25 strategies, provide technical assistance on an ongoing basis, and
26 take active roles in supporting the passage of any necessary
27 legislation; and be it further

28 *Resolved*, That the joint committee may work in cooperation
29 with the Governor and the standing committees and
30 subcommittees of the Legislature to address the level of support
31 necessary for public safety and related agencies to implement
32 essential emergency services and homeland security policies; and
33 be it further

34 *Resolved*, That the joint committee may periodically report its
35 progress and make recommendations to the Governor and the
36 Legislature; and be it further

37 *Resolved*, That the joint committee and its members shall have
38 and exercise all of the rights, duties, and powers conferred upon
39 investigating committees and their members by the Joint Rules of
40 the Assembly and Senate as they are adopted and amended from

1 time to time, which provisions are incorporated herein and made
2 applicable to this committee and its members; and be it further
3 *Resolved*, That the Senate Committee on Rules may make
4 moneys available from the Senate Operating Fund, as it deems
5 necessary, to pay expenses of the joint committee and its
6 members, and that any expenditure of moneys shall be made in
7 compliance with policies set forth by the Senate Committee on
8 Rules and shall be subject to the approval of the Senate
9 Committee on Rules; and be it further
10 *Resolved*, That the joint committee is authorized to act until
11 November 30, 2006, when its existence shall terminate; and be it
12 further
13 *Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of
14 this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.

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